

REMARKS

Applicants' representative wishes to thank Examiner Carpenter for the courtesy extended during the personal interview conducted on January 29, 2003. The claim amendments set forth above differ somewhat from those discussed during the interview.

A clean version of the Background and Summary of the Invention is supplied above as required in section 2 on page 2 of the Office Action.

Claims 16 and 19 were rejected, along with dependent claims 17, 18, 20, and 21, as being unpatentable (obvious) over U.S. Patent 4,559,868 to Nonaka et al. Reconsideration is requested.

In known motor vehicle constructions, dashboard upper parts are typically attached while windshields have not yet been mounted, and dashboard disassembly, repair, and dashboard replacement are difficult unless the windshield is also disassembled. This is discussed, for example, in paragraph 0003 of the specification. According to the present invention, these disadvantages are eliminated. As noted during the interview, claim 16 reflects that the cover part is detachably fixed to the housing part following installation of the windshield so as to be removable from the housing part, to provide for disassembly and repair, and replaceable on the housing part following the repair. Method claim 19 includes similar limitations. It is respectfully submitted that these

limitations serve to distinguish the present invention from the instrument panel forming the subject matter of the Nonaka et al. patent.

The remarks set forth in the response previously filed on April 16, 2002, should again be noted. The instrument panel assembly forming the subject matter of the Nonaka et al. patent is installed as a pre-assembled unit into a motor vehicle. The assembly has a base panel 21 in the form of a W. At that base panel 21 are mounted a face panel 2, a top panel 6 and a back panel 22. The base panel 21 is provided with fitting recesses 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35, in which the edges of the face panel 2, the top panel 6 and the back panel 22 are inserted. Thereafter, these panels are fixed by respective pluralities of screws 43, 47, 51 and 52.

The pluralities of screws 43, 47, 51, and 52 are all arranged such that they are accessible only from the back of the instrument panel assembly. As a result, the instrument panel assembly has to be completely assembled before the whole unit is mounted into a passenger vehicle and fixed to a member of the body of that vehicle.

In column 4, lines 53 to 55, and in Figure 3, the Nonaka et al. patent discloses that the back panel 22 of the instrument panel assembly is fixed to a rigid member, defining a firewall of the vehicle, by way of a plurality of bolts 54 and 55. Access to these bolts 54 and 55 is possible only from the motor compartment of the vehicle. The bolts 55 have to be

fixed to the back panel 22 before that back panel is fixed to the base panel 21.

The present invention is distinguished from the Nonaka et al. instrument panel device, since the dashboard assembly of the present invention is not a pre-assembled unit which has to be mounted or dismounted as a unit. The dashboard assembly of the present invention has a housing part mounted to the vehicle body and a cover part which is detachably mounted on that housing part. This is especially advantageous since repairs or service operations in the interior of the dashboard are possible without removing the instrument panel as a whole out of the vehicle. It is respectfully submitted that the Nonaka et al. patent does not disclose a passenger motor vehicle comprising, in addition to other elements, a housing part mounted to a vehicle body and a cover part which is detachably fixed to the housing part following installation of a windshield so as to be removable from the housing part to provide for disassembly, repair, and replacement following the repair, even though a windshield is installed already as claim 16 particularly defines. The Nonaka et al. patent also does not disclose a method of making a passenger motor vehicle comprising the particularly specified detachably connecting operation which provides for removing a cover part from a housing part even though a windshield is installed, performing a repair, and subsequently connecting either the cover part or another cover part to fastening structure as claim 19 defines.

Nothing relied on by the Examiner, moreover, suggests modifying the subject matter of the Nonaka et al. to include these features. It follows, therefore, that claims 16 and 19 are patentable.

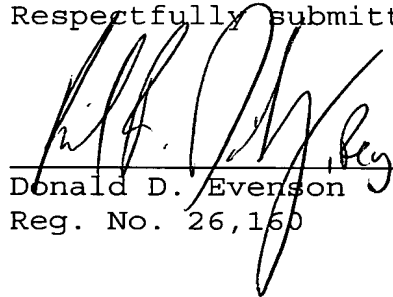
The rest of the claims in this application are dependent claims and are patentable as well.

This application will be in condition for allowance after entry of this Amendment for reasons discussed above. Entry of the Amendment and reconsideration of the application are requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Reply, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

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